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MEETING WITH:

SUBJECT: U.N. Outer Space Committee

SS staff visit with U.S. Delegate.

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[redacted] NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

August 17, 1971

MEMORANDUM FOR DR. McLUCAS

SUBJECT: Visit to Mr. Herb Reis, U.N. Delegation

To the right is a brief summary of a meeting with Mr. Herb Reis, U.S. U.N., on August 16 which was concerned with proceedings of the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Lt Colonel Hofmann and Major Coyle from the Staff visited Mr. Reis. This memorandum is for your information only.

[redacted]

Major, USAF

Naka

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[redacted] NATIONAL RECONNAISSANCE OFFICE

WASHINGTON, D.C.

THE NRO STAFF

August 17, 1971

Dr. McLucas has route

MEMORANDUM FOR THE RECORD

SUBJECT: Visit to Mr. Herb Reis, U.N. Delegation

Lt Colonel [redacted] and Major [redacted] visited Mr. Herb Reis, Counsel to the U.N. Ambassador and Delegate to the Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space, at the U.N. Mission on August 16. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the implications of current U.N. Outer Space Committee activities on our ability to continue overflights in a permissive environment.

After many years of deliberation, the Liability Convention is being finalized for submission to the General Assembly. As a result the Committee will have a great deal of surplus energy to direct toward several other issues. These issues are concerned with definition of a boundary of outer space, legal and ethical parameters of earth resource satellites, and identification and marking of spacecraft.

Mr. Reis informed us that the Liability Convention will be finalized in the Outer Space Committee in September. Both the Legal and Scientific and Technical Subcommittees have been working on such a convention since 1964. The General Assembly will receive the convention in October. Despite initial desires by the smaller countries, the convention, although arbitration is binding, does not require that a country be forced to settlement of a claim submitted by the injured country upon which space debris has fallen. Mr. Reis did not feel that there would be any

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pressures for explanations beyond a statement of origin data of liable spacecraft pieces.

With regard to the future proceedings of the Outer Space Committee and its subcommittees, Mr. Reis informed us that the Soviets have requested an informal bilateral discussion prior to the convening of the Outer Space Committee in September in order to discuss "priorities" of future activities. The Soviets have submitted a draft Moon Treaty proposal. This proposed treaty is almost an exact duplicate of the existing International Space Treaty except that it provides for dissemination of physical material returned from space such as moon rocks to the world scientific community. Our U.N. Mission does not want to make an issue of the apparent redundancy since it is suspected that the Soviets have submitted the proposed treaty in order to occupy the time of the Committee as a whole.

Mr. Reis did not feel that there is any immediate concern with regard to pressures to arrive at a definition of outer space. He felt that once ERTS-A is flown, there might be moves by third countries for formal discussion.

Some time following the ERTS-A mission, there is an Ad Hoc Committee meeting scheduled late next year to arrive at general legal and ethical parameters of earth resource surveys. Mr. Reis felt that this would be a very general effort and that the main unknown at this time is whether the Peoples Republic of China will be admitted to the U.N. and whether it will be given membership to the Outer Space Committee. In this event, China would be in a position to formally object to overflights by satellite.

Also under study at this time is the possibility of identification and marking of spacecraft. We gathered that Mr. Reis would like to see some means available in the future to enable conclusive identification of spacecraft pieces. We held an open ended discussion on this matter stating some concerns associated with stamping, impregnating or otherwise marking spacecraft components.

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In summary, the dialogue was very beneficial and Mr. Reis appeared to be extremely supportive of the continuation of the present permissive environment. The two major points of interest were first, the desire on the part of the Soviets to continue the policy of "gentle obstructionism" and the apparent desire of the U.S. to go along with this policy; and, second, the potential impact of admission of the Peoples Republic of China to the U.N. Mr. Reis expressed a desire to visit us to discuss further the military uses of space since we were constrained by physical security in discussing TK matters in his office. Both Mr. Reis and Ambassador Bush apparently remain close to the current intelligence status through frequent briefings at the Mission. No immediate action items were generated from the meeting.

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